

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 PM-09

NSC-10 SS-14 AID-20 OMB-01 RSR-01 /084 W
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O 230900 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 597
INFO USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE PRIORITY
AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 2621

USIA FOR ISB, IEA.

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CB

SUBJECT: SIRIK MATAK SPEAKS OUT AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT, SAYS
SIHANOUK SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO RETURN

1. ON MARCH 22 NYT CORRESPONDENT HENRY KAMM AND VOA
CORRESPONDENT JEFFREY SANDMANN INTERVIEWED SIRIK MATAK.
FOLLOWING IS SANDMANN' S COPY. DESPITE FACT THAT KAMM
WILL FILE THE SAME STORY WE DO NOT RPT NOT THINK IT
APPROPRIATE FOR VOA TO BROADCAST THIS REPORT OVER EITHER
ITS KHMER OR ITS ENGLISH LANGUAGE SERVICES; WE HAVE INSTRUCTED
THAT IT NOT RPT NOT BE.

2. QTE IT WAS EXPECTED THAT GENERAL SIRIK MATAK -- FORMER
PREMIER OF CAMBODIA AND MEMBER OF THE OLD ROYAL FAMILY -- WOULD

REJOIN THE GOVERNMENT OF MARSHALL LON NOL AS VICE- PRESIDENT
SOMETIME DURING THE MONTH OF MARCH. IN JANUARY THE GENERAL
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HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO ACCEPT THE POSITION OFFERED BY THE MARSHALL IN ANY APPARENT ATTEMPT TO STRENGTHEN CAMBODIA'S SHAKY GOVERNMENT. GENERAL SIRIK MATAK HAD IMPOSED THREE RELATIVELY MINOR CONDITIONS -- THE APPROVAL OF THE RULING SOCIO- REPUBLICAN PARTY, THE APPROVAL AND SUPPORT OF THE COUNTRY'S MILITARY LEADERS AND THE APPROVAL OF THE LEADERS OF BOTH HOUSES OF THE LEGISLATURE -- BEFORE HE WOULD ACCEPT THE POSITION.

3. QTE BUT DURING THE PAST TWO MONTHS, GENERAL SIRIK MATAK HAS HAD NO CONTACT WITH MARSHAL LON NOL AND HIS FUTURE IN THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW AN OPEN QUESTION. IN FACT, IT'S REPORTED THE GENERAL HIMSELF IS NOW UNDER HOUSE ARREST IN HIS COMFORTABLE VILLA A FEW HUNDRED METERS FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. THE GOVERNMENT SAYS THAT THE GENERAL'S PERSONAL GUARD HAS BEEN INCREASED DUE TO THE CURRENT STATE OF EMERGENCY. BUT GENERAL SIRIK MATAK BELIEVES THERE'S VERY LITTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE REINFORCEMENT OF THE GUARD AND HOUSE ARREST. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HIS TELEPHONES HAVE NOT BEEN WORKING SINCE LAST SATURDAY'S BOMBING ATTACK ON PHNOM PENH BY A FORMER AIR FORCE CAPTAIN.

4. QTE BUT SOME MEMBERS OF THE NEWS MEDIA HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO MEET WITH THE GENERAL AND HE IS PERMITTED TO LEAVE THE VILLA WHEN HE WISHES. THE EXACT EXTENT OF HIS FREEDOM -- HE SAYS - HAS NOT BEEN TESTED.

5. QTE GENERAL SIRIK MATAK PREDICTS THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF MARSHAL LON NOL WILL NOT LAST LONG. HE SAYS IT HAS LOST THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE AND IS NOW NOT MUCH MORE THAN A MILITARY

DICTATORSHIP -- EXISTING ON THE SUPPORT FROM THE UNITED STATES. HE SAID, " THE MOMENT HAS PASSED WHEN THIS GOVERNMENT CAN BE MADE POPULAR."

6. QTE THE GENERAL SAID THE GOVERNMENT IS USING LAST SATURDAY'S BOMBING ATTACK AND GRENADE INCIDENT AS PRETEXTS FOR IMPOSING THE STATE OF EMERGENCY. IN FACT, HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF STAGED THE GRENADE ATTACK ON A RALLY OF STRIKING TEACHERS -- KILLING THREE PERSONS -- AND THE SUBSEQUENT ARREST OF MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY AS DIVERSIONARY MEASURES TO COVER UP THE SOCIAL UNREST WHICH -- HE SAYS -- THE GOVERNMENT IS UNABLE TO CONTROL.

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7. QTE ACCORDING TO GENERAL SIRIK MATAK, IN ORDER FOR PEACE

TO COME TO CAMBODIA THE GOVERNMENT MUST OPEN THE DOOR FOR NEGOTIATIONS TO ALL FACTIONS -- INCLUDING THE ONE SUPPORTING THE DEPOSED PRINCE SIHANOUK. THE GENERAL SAID PRINCE SIHANOUK NOW HAS MORE POPULAR SUPPORT IN CAMBODIA THAN MARSHALL LON NOL. AND HE SAID HE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO HIS COUNTRY.

8. QTE GENERAL SIRIK MATAK HIMSELF NOW SITS AND WAITS IN HIS VILLA FOR WORD FROM MARSHALL LON NOL THAT THE GENERAL' S CONDITIONS FOR BECOMING VICE- PRESIDENT HAVE BEEN MET. HE SAYS HE IS A KHMER CITIZEN AND IS PREPARED TO SERVE HIS COUNTRY. " I WILL REMAIN HERE IN CAMBODIA," THE SIXTY- YEAR- OLD GENERAL SAID, " UNTIL MY DEATH, WHENEVER THAT MAY COME." (SIGNED JEFFREY SANDMANN, VOA, PHNOM PENH) UNQTE.

9. COMMENT: WE DO NOT RPT NOT THINK ANY PART OF THIS STORY SHOULD BE USED, BUT IF KAMM' S STORY IN THE NEW YORK TIMES SHOULD REFER TO THE PRESENCE OF THE VOA REPORTER SANDMANN USIA WILL NATURALLY WISH TO CONFIRM HIS PRESENCE. SANDMANN HAS BEEN VERY COOPERATIVE WITH US THROUGHOUT THIS EPISODE.
SWANK

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